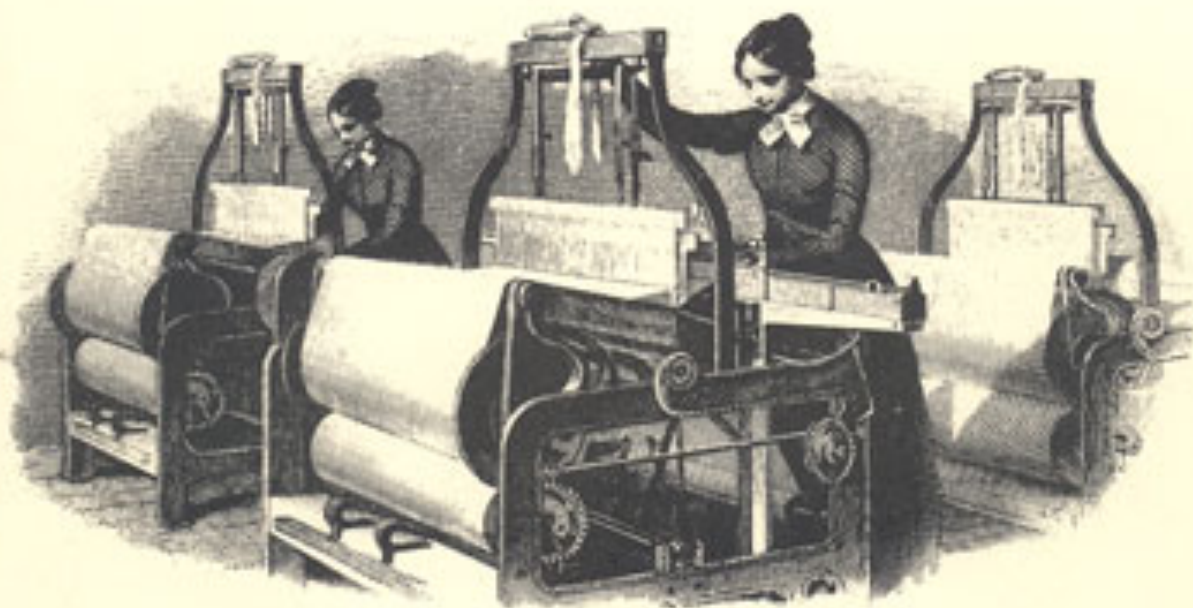


# Caught Between Two Worlds

The Diary of a Lowell Mill Girl



Edited by

Mary H. Blewett

## **CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

The Diary of a Lowell Mill Girl,  
Susan Brown of Epsom, New Hampshire

Mary H. Blewett  
Editor

Lowell Museum  
Lowell, Massachusetts  
1984

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of John Rogers Flather.

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## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Regulations of the Middlesex Company,  
1846, p.22. New York

Middlesex Company, 1850, p.35.

Regulations for the Boarding Houses of  
the Middlesex Company, 1846, p.44.

View of Merrimac Street, Lowell, Mass.,  
1856, p.52.

Power Loom, One Girl Attends Four,  
ca.1840, p.57.

### **Acknowledgements**

The diary of Susan Brown is reproduced in its original spelling and punctuation. Material within the brackets has been added by the editor. The small size of the diary and Susan Brown's use of a soft, blunt pencil rendered some of the words illegible. Many of the events and names in the diary were identified in the 1844 Lowell City Directory, the federal manuscript census of population for 1840 and in the January to September 1843 issues of the Lowell Courier.

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The publication of this diary is dedicated to Tom Dublin.

**M.H.B.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the early 1820s the Boston Associates built the Lowell mills, had the power canals dug and the great water wheels set in place, and put together the system of machinery which produced cotton cloth under one factory roof. They had, however, an immediate human problem: who was to work the machines which turned out the textiles? Most New England men were farmers and would not leave the land to work all day in factories. To tempt the skilled Yankee artisans and freehold farmers with wages high enough to persuade them to leave their customary work would have cost the Lowell mill owners far too much money. In order to realize the profits they expected from the large capital investment in land, buildings and machinery, the Lowell capitalists recruited an untapped source of labor to industrial work: the New England farm girl.

Young, unmarried women could be paid much less in wages than young men, but as textile operatives they earned higher wages than in any other women's occupation. Work for them was intended to be a brief experience prior to marriage. An operative's job at the loom or the spinning frame was easily learned, and after several years, each mill girl would return home with savings in her pocket to become a bride. Healthy, hard working farm girls with thrifty habits and unquestioned morality were encouraged to spend a year or two or more as Lowell mill girls. Their parents were assured that the virtues of their Yankee daughters would be preserved by a system of careful supervision both at work and in the corporation boarding houses where they would eat and sleep. The steady work habits and disciplined characters of the girlhood of New England would be adapted to the factory system. A high rate of turnover in the work force as young women came to work in the Lowell mills and returned to their families -- protected the health and morality of the operatives, released them from industrial work to marry and kept the wage rate down. The experience of the factory system, furthermore, did not undermine the habits and behavior of these daughters of New England villages nor turn them into a degraded proletariat.

Neither the time schedules of the boarding houses nor the rhythms of industrial work overwhelmed the culture of rural life from which they came nor made them forget that they were their fathers' daughters: the daughters of Yankee freemen.

Thousands and thousands of girls from the towns and villages of New England came to work in the Lowell textile mills in the four decades before the

Civil War. Historians know about their lives from many sources. Corporation work rules and boarding house regulations show the plan and pattern of their lives as industrial workers. Payroll records indicate how much money they earned in wages, where they worked and which jobs they performed. The federal census, the vital records of New England towns and the early directories of Lowell yield information on their ages and families, their places of residence and the circumstances of their marriages. The Lowell Offering, published in the early 1840s by factory operatives, reveals the literary interests and abilities of some of them in essays, poetry and short stories which occasionally express their yearnings for home and reveal the reasons why they came to work in the mills. The Voice of Industry in the mid 1840s provides evidence of early labor protest by women

-3-

operatives. There are two published memoirs of mill girls who became distinguished women of Massachusetts in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Recently, letters and diaries of Lowell mill girls have been discovered on the shelves of archives and libraries or among family papers stored away in trunks in New England attics. Renewed interest in the lives of Lowell mill girls has resulted in the publication of some of these letters.<sup>2</sup>

Diaries are more rare. One is the diary of Mary Hall of Concord, New Hampshire, transcribed in 1967 and located in the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord. Hall's diary, which was kept for five years between 1831 and 1836, was concise and terse, and its pages were often filled with disappointing entries of "not anything interesting" or "nothing particular." Many of the dates were blank, leaving the historian with no clue to Mary Hall's thoughts or activities.

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1. Lucy Larcom, A New England Girlhood. (1889) and Harriet Hanson Robinson, Loom & Spindle (1898).
2. Thomas Dublin, Farm to Factory: Women's Letters, 1830-1860, Columbia University Press, 1981.

-4-

In 1979 I came across the diaries of Susan Brown Forbes at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. Among the many annual records which she kept between 1841 and 1907 was a "Lowell Almanac, Business Key and Pocket Memorandum" published by Powers & Bagley of Lowell in 1843. In this pocket diary Susan Brown recorded her experiences as a mill girl.<sup>3</sup>

Diarists often recorded what appeared important to them, not what historians would like to know. In the case of Susan Brown, her diary leaves an incomplete picture of the experience of industrial work for a New England girl from the countryside. From her diary, we can learn something about her work but more about her social life: whom she saw and what she did. Her diary from 1843 is filled with her activities, records of her wages, her expenses and expenditures, and the people with whom she associated. Susan Brown remained very much a New England village girl while she worked as a weaver in the Middlesex Mills. In the evocative words of Thomas Dublin, she was "caught between two worlds:" the world of the New England

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 3. The diary is about the size of a 3 x 5 index card and was written with a blunt, soft pencil, rendering some words illegible.

-5-

village and the industrial world of the textile city.<sup>4</sup>

Susan Elizabeth Parsons Brown was born on a farm in Epsom, a small town located in the hilly upcountry land of Merrimack County, New Hampshire. Her father was William Brown, a farmer whose ownership of \$2,000 in real estate in 1850 placed him among the average property owners in the town. Her mother was Lucretia Billings Gray of Epsom, the daughter of James Gray and Suzanna Parsons. She had one sister, Mary Lucy. In 1841 when her diaries begin, she was enrolled as a student at the nearby Pittsfield Academy, a private high school. In May of that year at the age of seventeen, she began teaching school in Epsom, a situation which she viewed with decidedly mixed feelings. On May 13, she wrote: "Spent the day at my school room feeling very unlike the task before me that of instructing about a dozen urchins in their A.B.C.s..." She persevered, however, and in 1842 she taught forty seven children at a school in Pittsfield. Apparently dissatisfied with teaching, she decided to become a Lowell mill girl, and on

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4. Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation, Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826 - 1860, Columbia University Press, 1979, p.56.

-6-

January 16, 1843 she arrived in the city on the Concord stage coach. She was eighteen years of age.

On the day before she left for Lowell, Susan Brown, like many of the young women operatives, knew exactly where she was going to work and where she was going to board. A private network of family connections and information had preceded her to Lowell. She noted on January 15 that she would reside with a family known to her parents, the William Stickneys on Lawrence Street, and work with the Stickney daughters in the



Middlesex Mills. The Middlesex was located on the Concord River, somewhat east and down stream from the other major textile corporations of Lowell which drew their water power from the canal system fed by the Merrimack River.

The Middlesex Mills were owned by the Lawrence family of Boston, and the factories turned out woolen textiles rather than the calicos, jeans and broad-cloths produced by the eight cotton mills of Lowell. In December 1842 with the introduction of the Crompton loom at the Middlesex, the mill Agent decided to cut piece rates for weaving on the grounds that the new looms would speed up the weaving process and result in higher wages to the workers. The weavers at the Middlesex objected and

-7-

called a strike, one of the leaders of which probably was weaver Eliza M. Hemenway, later of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association<sup>5</sup> Making contact with new girls like Susan Brown and preventing them from working during a "turnout" was a difficult problem for the strikers, and their efforts failed. After resting at the Stickney's house for one day after her journey, Susan Brown began to work as a sparehand weaver, learning how to operate a loom in one of the buildings owned by the Middlesex Corporation. When she took her place on January 18, 1843, she did not mention strikes or wage cuts in her diary and seemed unconscious that she was a strike-breaker. On January 24, her sister Lucy arrived by stage coach from Epsom to join her, boarding with the Stickneys and working at the Middlesex.

Family ties and a network of friends and the and kin had accompanied Susan and Lucy Brown to Lowell and were maintained

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5. This organization, formed in 1845 and led by early labor activist Sarah Bagley,

criticized the way the mill managers treated the operatives, opposed wage cuts and helped publish a labor paper, The Voice of Industry, beginning in October 1845 which expressed the interests of New England textile workers.

-8-

throughout their stay in the city. On February 9 a family friend, Ben Bickford, stopped by and spent the evening at the Stickneys. Upon his return to Epsom, he no doubt told the Browns that their daughters were safe and at work. This visit was followed by a succession of other visitors from Epsom including Brown family members. Family ties were also maintained by letters, by baskets of home made treats sent to Susan by stage coach and by a two week visit in July from her mother. During her mother's stay in Lowell, Susan spent some time away from her work as a weaver and enjoyed social gatherings at the Stickneys among other families with whom she had become acquainted. She and her mother watched together at the sick bed of a family friend, and before her mother returned to Epsom, she did up Susan's laundry for her. Her mother's visit was especially important to Susan, because her sister Lucy had quit work in the Middlesex in May and returned to Epsom in early June.

Boarding with a private family in Lowell was not typical of the experience of textile operatives. Most of the mill managers made sure that the mill girl's boarded in the corporation boarding houses run by respectable older women, many of them widows, who maintained decorum and enforced the rules and regulations. For Susan, boarding with

-9-

the Stickneys and working with the

Stickney daughters had special advantages. One cold, snowy evening in mid February, Mr. Stickney "came with a sleigh after us." Being part of the Stickney family also brought Susan into contact with their family friends, the Fosses, the Hodgmans, the Hams, the Whipples and the Dabneys, some of whom apparently also knew the Browns of Epsom. In early March after a spell of sickness, Susan left the Stickney house to board with the Fosses who also lived on Lawrence Street, but she continued to make social calls at the Stickneys and went to parties with their daughters. In many ways, Susan was still part of the village life of New England even in Lowell. Also boarding with the Fosses was the Ham family, whose son George, a carpenter became Susan's friend and companion as she explored the city and its cultural opportunities.

The new vista of social experience which working as a mill girl opened to the New England farmer's daughter was certainly one compelling reason for her to step into the stage coach to Lowell. During the first weeks of her stay in the city, Susan Brown attended public lectures, and on Sundays she investigated the various churches, one by one, observing the differences in doctrine and service. She greatly disapproved of

-10-

both the Roman Catholic and the Free Will Baptist churches and much preferred the Unitarian Church of the Reverend Henry A. Miles or the Second Congregational Church of Uzziah Burnap.

On her evenings after work, she took the opportunity to sample the cultural activities of the new city, including lectures by anti slavery advocates and on temperance and magnetism. She attended a performance of the "Reformed Drunkard's Comedy" and heard a lecture by Asa Gray of Harvard College on the new geology.<sup>6</sup>

She listened to concerts at Mechanics' Hall and heard the famous Hutchinson family singers. She was attracted to curiosities: lectures by a "Portuguese" preacher, by a "Jew" and by a "Jewess." She saw a staged reconstruction of the burning of Moscow in 1812. She ate quantities of ice cream at French's ice cream parlor on Central Street. Frequently during the summer months, she and her companions strolled through the woodsy grounds of the new Lowell Cemetery, which, like many Victorian cemeteries such as Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was designed as an urban park to be used and admired by

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6. Fossil discoveries led to a new periodization of the evolution of the earth which contradicted Biblical creation.

-11-

the living. In June she took the train to Boston with George Ham to attend the services dedicating the Bunker Hill monument, heard Daniel Webster speak at the occasion which she noted as "grand indeed," and toured the city, its churches and parks.

Susan Brown's new cultural experiences were balanced by an intensive routine of social visiting with family friends, almost as though she had never left Epsom. During these visits, she maintained many social practices common to New England village life. She watched along with others at the bedsides of the sick and the dying, attended funerals and cared for the children of family friends. She took tea and spent evenings in the homes of various families. She called on the minister's wife, Mrs. Miles. She ran errands for Mrs. Ham. When, as Lucy prepared to return to Epsom, Susan moved into a Middlesex boarding house on Hurd Street, she felt cut off from this social activity and wrote on June 1: "Spent the night at my own boarding house among

entire strangers."

In her Hurd Street boarding house, Susan Brown quickly made friends among her fellow boarders: New England girls from home and families much like her own. Thomas Dublin has described these friendships as a community of peers which

-12-

created a collective sense of common background and experience which was important to the formation of groups of mill girls who wrote for the Lowell Offering and organized the Female Labor Reform Association. Susan Brown's diary indicates that while she did form some friendships among girls in her boarding house and in the Middlesex Mills, her closest companions lived in other boarding houses and worked for other corporations. At the end of her pocket diary, there was a business key to Lowell which listed the addresses of all the corporation boarding houses. Susan placed cross marks beside boarding houses operated for the Appleton, Boott, Lawrence and Suffolk and Tremont mills as well as two private boarding houses. Her network of friends who lived at the addresses so marked seemed to have been formed from village and family connections, rather than by common residence and work in Lowell. Susan and her mill girl friends attended church together, called on acquaintances and shopped the many retail stores on Merrimack and Central Streets. More importantly, Susan integrated her friends into her intensive social life among the people she had come to know on Lawrence Street. Together they attended funerals, took tea and ran helpful errands, thereby balancing their experiences as mill operatives by maintaining the social patterns of village

-13-

Life. When Susan returned home in September 1843, beside her in the stage coach rode a friend from Epsom, the sister of Ben Bickford who had first called on the Brown sisters at the Stickney house in February.

Susan Brown's diary contains fewer references to work than to her social activities. She wrote down nothing about her experience learning to weave nor her reactions to factory work except some infrequent outbursts of homesick longing to return to Epsom.

May 8: Sixteen weeks today! But it will not be sixteen weeks longer here.

May 10: Still immured within the massey brick walls of a hateful factory...

August 18: Seven months since I first entered the Middlesex -  
Since I saw home! Alone, &  
among strangers! Oh, when shall I return?

According to the regulations of the Middlesex Corporation and of all the mills in Lowell, operatives in good standing were required to work for at least one year, give two weeks notice before leaving, board in a corporation

-14-

boarding house and have their work closely supervised. Susan Brown's experience as a textile worker conformed to none of these stipulations, although her experience at the Middlesex may not have been typical of other operatives and the management of the Middlesex often came under public criticism for incompetence. Susan worked for nine months, left apparently without giving two weeks notice and did not live in a corporation

boarding house until she had worked as a weaver for four and a half months. Perhaps she did not care ever to return to Lowell as a mill girl when she left in September. Her diary for 1844 was lost, and in 1845 she returned to school teaching.

For the first five weeks of her work at the Middlesex, Susan worked regularly and steadily for 12 to 14 hours a day. She made no complaints in her diary and recorded the payment of her first wages on February 9 as \$4.32. The average earnings of most mill girls were \$2.00 to \$2.50 a week after paying board of \$1.25 to \$1.50. Susan had worked 20 days on piece work weaving, earning about 22 cents a day or \$1.30 a week, a reflection of her inexperience and her position as a sparehand. On March 10 she received \$8.95 for 19 days work, averaging 47 cents a day and more than doubling her earnings. She was able to pay the

-15-

Stickneys \$6.25 which she owed them in board for about two months and kept the balance of \$2.70. In early March she at last felt some money jingling in her pocket. By the end of her nine months of work at the Middlesex, she had earned \$78.07 for 171 days of weaving and had paid out at least twenty dollars in board, an expense which she did not faithfully record. As a weaver at the Middlesex, she averaged 46 cents a day or \$2.76 a week before she paid her board, less than the typical earnings of other operatives. Perhaps she became discouraged by her relatively low earnings and decided to return to Epsom. Her work patterns at the Middlesex after the first five weeks became irregular and unsteady, one result of which was the below average wages she earned.

Some of the irregularity of her work habits seemed a matter of Susan's choice; occasionally she "came out of the mill

for the day" as on February 16. The next day she made social calls on friends with Almira Stickney. In March and April she was sick for a few days and came out of the mill early on two more days. Between April 8 and 12, she recorded herself as sick, but went shopping in the afternoon of April 11. Perhaps the management of the Middlesex did not enforce the factory discipline for which the other textile mills were famous. There were other

-16-

factors beyond the control of either the mill agents or the operatives which stopped the water wheels and the looms. As the waters of the Merrimack River rose in the spring swollen with the melting snow from the White Mountains in New Hampshire, the water backed up in the power canals and swamped the water wheels, preventing them from turning properly. No power was transmitted to the machines; this was called "back-water." In mid April the Middlesex mills along with some of the others temporarily suspended work because of back-water produced by the spring thaw. Susan and her friends explored the city and enjoyed the warm weather. The work stoppage, the lost time and wages and another bout of sickness prompted Susan to consider for the first time going home to Epsom. With spring in full bloom around her, she wrote on May 1: "Did not go to the mill. I thought of going away." Sister Lucy had already decided. She quit work on May 12 and left Lowell within a month.

Susan worked steadily for two weeks in early May and then, on May 22, she wrote: "Sick, did not work. Mrs. Hodgman and I called at Mrs. Osgoods." That afternoon and with no apparent twinge of a Puritan conscience, she bought herself a new bonnet at a milliner's shop on Central Street. She worked steadily

-17-



again for another month, then treated herself to a trip to Boston to observe the Bunker Hill dedication ceremonies. After her return, she continued a pattern of irregular work until she left Lowell in September. Sometimes Susan spent hours waiting for a "beam", an essential part of the weaving process. The beam already wound with warp threads fit into the back of the loom. The yarn which was wound on bobbins and carried in the shuttles of the loom was woven through the warp threads from the beam into cloth. Because Susan earned her wages by piece work, these delays reduced her pay. After her mother's visit in July, she worked steadily for four weeks, interrupted only by having to wait for a beam or by teaching a new sparehand weaver.

If Susan's work experience was recorded as irregular and reported to her diary with a minimum of interest, she habitually wrote down the receipt of her wages and noted with care the purchases she made with her earnings. Her wages were not sent to her family. Her decision to come to Lowell seemed to have been a choice of new employment for her, rather than as a supplement to her family's income. Susan had the pleasure of spending much of her earnings on whatever she chose, which gave her a real measure of economic independence from her family, as a consumer at least. During

-18-

her nine months in Lowell, she bought a Bible, one other book and a trunk. Most of her expenditures were made on personal apparel: a pair of rubbers, a bonnet, a pair of gaiters or cloth coverings for her shoes, a pair of mitts or fingerless gloves and a dress of calico cloth. She had a brooch mended by a local jeweler. She had two dresses made at Mrs.

Pollard's on Merrimack Street and another expertly cut out to be made. She bought a \$5.00 shawl, a major purchase. In a flurry of shopping in August and September just before leaving for Epsom, she purchased an album, a \$2.00 Highland shawl, needles and linen for "wristers" or ornamental cuffs, a pair of elastic mitts and \$8.00 of yard goods for dresses. As she and her friend climbed into the Concord stage coach on September 21, Susan Brown had had the satisfaction of thoroughly outfitting herself by her own labor.

After her experience as a mill girl, Susan Brown returned to school teaching in various New Hampshire towns, but she did not stay. She, like many of the New England girls who had worked in Lowell, had been changed by her experience. In 1856 she became a clerk in a Boston department store and met Alexander B. Forbes at the boarding house where she was living. They married in 1859 when she was thirty five years old and together ran a boarding house until 1866

-19-

when Forbes took his wife to Springfield, Massachusetts, where he opened the department store, Forbes and Wallace. Susan Brown Forbes lived in Springfield, kept her diaries until 1907 and died there in 1910. Her nine months as a Lowell operative represented only a tiny portion of her life which was less typical of the experience of most mill girls who worked on the average three or four years. No one experience recorded in a single diary is representative of the majority, but Susan Brown, like many New England girls, responded to the attractions of the new opportunities offered in the Lowell mills. Drawn by the prospects of good wages and a chance to see and enjoy the cultural advantages of city life, she joined the stream of Yankee women prior to the Civil War who, before the arrival of immigrants from

Ireland, worked the looms and spindles  
and made the Lowell textile factories  
famous.

-20-

January 1843

Sunday

January, 15: Am to leave home tomorrow  
for Lowell to board at [William]  
Stickney's and work in the Middlesex  
Mills with his daughters

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1. In 1843 the Middlesex Manufacturing  
Company operated two mills with dye-  
houses, ran 4,620 spindles for woolen  
yarn and 129 looms which produced  
cassimere and broadcloth woolen goods.  
The mill employed 400 female and 220 male  
operatives. The company had been incorp-  
orated in 1828 with capital assets of  
\$600,000. The treasurer was Samuel  
Lawrence and the mill agent was James  
Cook. The management of the Middlesex  
came under increasing public criticism in  
the 1840s for incompetence. By 1848  
Samuel Lawrence, the black sheep of the  
Lawrence family of Boston in comparision  
with his brothers Amos and Abbott who  
founded the city of Lawrence in 1845, had  
run the company down, lost its capital  
and went bankrupt. The Middlesex was  
bought in 1850 by Benjamin F. Butler of  
Lowell, a political rival of the textile  
interests and a friend of the operatives,  
who immediately cut the work day to ten  
hours.

William Stickney was a carpenter  
employed at the O.M. Whipple Powder Mill  
which made gunpowder and was located on  
the Concord River.

-21-

## REGULATIONS

TO BE OBSERVED BY ALL PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE FACTORIES OF THE

### MIDDLESEX COMPANY.

The overseers are to be punctually in their rooms at the starting of the mill, and not to be absent unnecessarily during working hours. They are to see that all those employed in their rooms are in their places in due season. They may grant leave of absence to those employed under them, when there are spare hands in the room to supply their places; otherwise they are not to grant leave of absence, except in cases of absolute necessity. Every overseer must be the last to leave the room at night, and must see that the lights are all properly extinguished, and that there is no fire in the room. No overseer should leave his room in the evening while the mill is running, except in case of absolute necessity.

All persons in the employ of the Middlesex Company are required to observe the regulations of the overseer of the room where they are employed. They are not to be absent from their work, without his consent, except in case of sickness, and then they are to send him word of the cause of their absence.

They are to board in one of the boarding-houses belonging to the Company, unless otherwise permitted by the agent or superintendent, and conform to the regulations of the house where they board. They are to give information at the counting-room of the place where they board when they begin;

and also give notice whenever they change their boarding place.

The Company will not employ any one who is habitually absent from public worship on the Sabbath, or whose habits are not regular and correct.

All persons entering into the employment of the Company are considered as engaged for twelve months; and those who leave sooner will not receive a regular discharge.

All persons intending to leave the employment of the Company are to give two weeks' notice of their intention to their overseer; and their engagement is not considered as fulfilled unless they comply with this regulation.

Smoking within the factory yards will in no case be permitted.

The pay-roll will be made up to the end of every month, and the payment made in the course of the following week.

These regulations are considered a part of the contract with persons entering into the employment of the MIDDLESEX COMPANY.

**Samuel Lawrence, Agent.**

Lowell, July 1, 1846.

Earl Taylor, Printer, Courier Office.

Regulations of Middlesex Company, 1846  
(University of Lowell)

January 1843

16 - Took stage for Lowell this AM and

arrived at Mrs. Stickneys before  
night Father took me to Jenness  
Corner for the stage<sup>1</sup> a terribly  
cold

17 - Wrote home.

18 - Began work in Lawrence Woolen Mill  
on the Middlesex Corporation. Board  
at Mrs. Stickney's, Lawrence Street.

19 - Went to the Bethel Association.

20 -

21 -

22 - Morning, Attended Mr. Burknep's  
Church. A.M. Afternoon, Mr. McCoy's  
Episcopal Church.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The stage coach service ran once a day  
between Concord, New Hampshire and Lowell  
on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and  
from Lowell to Concord on Tuesdays,  
Thursdays and Saturdays.

2. Uzziah C. Burnap, Second Congregation-  
al Church, Appleton Street and A.D.  
McCoy, Second Episcopal Church, Merrimack  
Street.

-23-

January 1843

23 -

24 - Sister Lucy came to Lowell to work  
in the mill with me. Board at Mr.  
Stickneys. Lucy came down.<sup>1</sup>

25 - Bickford came down. Went to the  
Institute.<sup>2</sup>

26 -

27 -

28 -

29 - Attended Mr. Burknep's Church AM.  
Wrote home.

30 -

Feb 1 -

2 -

3 -

4 - Joseph Robinson spent the eve at Mr.

Stickney's.

- 5 Attended the Roman Catholic Church  
A.M.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Burknep's Church in the  
afternoon.

- 1. Lucy Brown was twenty one years old in  
1843.  
2. The Lowell Institute was an associ-  
ation of local gentlemen who sponsored  
lectures and musical concerts often held  
in the City Hall on Merrimack Street.  
3. St. Patrick's Church on Suffolk Street  
or St. Peter's on Central Street.

-24-

February 1843

- 6 -  
7 -  
8 - Went to the Institute and heard Mr.  
Miles.<sup>1</sup>  
  
9 - Mr. Ben Bickford came down from  
Epsom.  
  
10 - Received 4.32 cts [in wages] from  
Peter Anderson<sup>2</sup>  
  
11 - Received a paper from C. E. Rand.  
Bought a bible of Hayes.  
  
12 - Attended G.W. Beard's Temperance  
lecture in the City Hall Snowy.  
  
13 - Fine Sleighing.  
  
14 - Snowy. Mr. Stickney came with a  
sleigh after us. Paid Mr.  
Stickney 1.43 cts. [in board]  
  
15 - Spent the eve at Mrs. Hams.<sup>3</sup>  
-----  
1. Reverend Henry A. Miles, rector of the  
South Congregational Unitarian Church on  
Merrimack Street and the author in 1845  
of Lowell As It Is. and As It Was. The  
topic of his lecture at the Institute is  
not known.

2. Paymaster, Middlesex Company.
3. Isaac L. Ham and his wife lived on Lawrence Street near the Stickneys.

-25-

February 1843

- 16 - Came out of the mill for the day
- 17 - Almira and I made calls and dined at Wm Foss's
- 18 - Went to work again
- 19 - Attended Mr. Burknep's church.  
Called at Eben Foss<sup>1</sup>
- 20 -
- 21 - Went to Almira's party. At a walnut [cake] with Mr. Frank J. Nourse.<sup>2</sup>
- 22 -
- 23 -
- 24 -
- 25 -
- 26 - Went to the Unitarian Church. Heard Mr. Wellington of Manchester.
- 27 -
- 28 -
- March 1 -  
Went to the Institute. Pro. James C. Smith lectured on Geology.

- 
1. Eben Foss also lived on Lawrence Street where he shared a house with the Hams. He worked as a teamster.
  2. Frank H. Nourse was identified in the 1844 Lowell City Directory as a clerk for a local auctioneer who boarded in Lowell.

-26-

March 1843

- 2 - Came out sick at noon. Spent the

night at Mr. Foss.<sup>1</sup>

- 3 - Did not go into the mills.
- 4 -
- 5 - Afternoon attended Mr. Miles meeting. Liked very much.
- 6 -
- 7 -
- 8 - Removed to Eben Foss to Board - near by the Dabneys and in house with Isaac Ham and family - one son George.<sup>2</sup>
- 9 - George has returned from Gilmanton [New Hampshire]
- 10 - Received 8.95 cts from Mr. Anderson  
Paid Mr. Stickney 6.25 cts [in board] leaving myself 2.70.

---

1. Susan's recurrent bouts of "sickness" may have been the result of the close air and fumes from the lamps which lit the area where the weavers worked. In 1846 Eliza Hemenway testified to a high incidence of sickness among the Middlesex weavers, see Hannah Josephson, The Golden Threads New England's Mill Girls and Magnates. 1949, p. 257.

2. George Ham was a carpenter who became a friend and companion of Susan Brown's.

-27-

March 1843

- 11 - [Met] Mr. Nourse on Market St. Came out of the mill at 4 o'clock.
- 12 - Morning. Attending Mr. Woodman's church on Merrimac St. Was less pleased with the service than any other save the Catholic that I have attended. Heard Dr. Robinson's experience at the City Hall<sup>1</sup>
- 13 -
- 14 -
- 15 - Institute closed.



16 - Orrin and Jonathan Sanderson [of Epsom] arrived in Lowell. Called at Mr. Stickney's. Went [walking] on the Street.

---

1. Jonathan Woodman, First Free Will Baptist Church on Merrimack Street. Dr. Robinson was a temperance lecturer who also ran a small company of actors which performed temperance dramas, such as "The Reformed Drunkard's Comedy," in many New England towns in 1843. The temperance cause was strong in Lowell in the early 1840s. The Lowell Courier and its editor William Schouler supported it. The Lowell Washington Total Abstinence Society ran a hotel on Central Street which featured a temperance oyster bar. Its ladies' auxiliary, the Martha Washingtons, ran fund raising activities in Lowell.

-28-

March 1843

17 -

18 - Had a social party at E. Foss.  
Wells spent the night here.

19 - Attended Mr. Burknep's meeting all day. Spent the eve at Wm Foss:

20 -

21 - Went to the Museum<sup>1</sup>

22 - Paid board up to this day. Went to the reformed drunkard's comedy.<sup>2</sup>

23 - Called at Mr. Stickney's

24 -

25 -

---

1. The Lowell Museum on April 21, 1843 featured: "The original, well-known, and justly celebrated Ventriloquist, and Prof'r of Ledgerdemain,..." Mr. Harrington of Boston. The advertisement in the Lowell Courier promised: "Laughable, Comical, Quisical, Mysterious, Magical, Wonderful, Astonishing Experiments of Ventriloquism, Imitations, &c, &c, &c." Tickets admitting two persons

were 25 cents and the performance began at 8 PM.

2. Later, Susan crossed out the first item in the entry. The Robinson company of temperance players performed the comedy at City Hall.

-29-

March 1843

26 - Heard Mr. Taylor at Mr. Burknep's church AM. Mr. Burknep pm. Went to Mr. Fitts Gibbon Temperance lecture.

27 -

28 -

29 -

30 -

31 -

April 1 -

2 - Went to Mr. Burknep's church AM. Heard Mr. Kimball's Temperance lecture at the City Hall.

3 - Attended Mr. Grey's Geological lecture at the John St. vestry.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Asa Gray of Andover, Massachusetts, a geologist at Harvard College, had lectured previously at Mechanics' Hall operated by the Middlesex Mechanics' Association on May 29, 1843 on "Age and End of the World!" His lectures were illustrated by pictures of plant and animal fossils recently discovered by paleontologists which raised questions about the dating of the earth's formation from the creation story in the Bible. On April 3 and 4 Gray lectured at the John Street Congregational church.

-30-

April 1843

4 - Went to Mr. Grey's lecture on

Geology.

5 - Lucy came out sick. Came home from the mill at three o'clock. Called at Mr. Stickney's. Rainy. Paid board up to the day.

6 - Fast Day.<sup>1</sup> Wrote home. Very much snow for the Season.

7 - Lucy bought her shawl. Received 7.95 cts. from Anderson. Paid Eben 5 dolls [dollars for board].

8 - [Illegible word] Dr. Landers Called. Gave everyone emetic and pills. Did not work.

9 - Lucy went to Mr. Burknep's church all day. I did not go out. Pleasant.

10 - Lucy went to Middlesex at 7 o'clock. Did not go to work myself. Called at Mr. Foss. Dr. Landers called.

-----  
1. A traditional New England religious observance of fasting and prayer, still observed as a holiday in New Hampshire.

-31-

April 1843

11 - George Ham went to Boston. Did not go to the mill. Received a letter from Mr. E. Proctor. Bought my rubbers. Went to the Conflagration of Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

12 - Did not go to work. Miss Nancy Mason visited here.

13 - Entered Middlesex again.

14 -

-----  
1. Susan might have bought her rubbers at a shoe store which she later patronized for gaiters, Andrew C. Wright, Boot, Shoe and Leather Store on Merrimack

Street which advertised "Ladies Thick and Thin Shoes, Gaiters and Rubbers of all kinds." "The Conflagration of Moscow" was staged at the Lowell Museum as a sound and light show depicting with cannon fire and military music the burning of the city by Napoleon in 1812. It was billed as "Great an Unprecedented Attraction!" The Lowell Museum burned down later in the 1840s.

-32-

April 1843

15 - Back water came out at noon.<sup>1</sup>

16 - Went to Gorham St. heard Mr. [illegible] from Worcester AM. Mr. Minor at 2nd Universalist PM.<sup>2</sup> Very warm.

-----  
1. The spring of 1843 was uncommonly snowy and rainy. By mid April both the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, swollen by quickly melting snow and rain, had risen 15 feet. According to the Lowell Courier of April 18, 1843, the winter ice in the Merrimack had broken loose and was plunging over the Pawtucket Falls. The view was magnificent. As a result of all of the water, the canals on the lower level of the Locks and Canals system had risen and swamped the water wheels at the Middlesex, the Massachusetts, the Boot and the Lawrence. The rest of the mills on the upper level of the canal system continued to operate. By April 20, the rivers had subsided five feet.  
2. The Second Universalist Church on Market Street was led by Alonzo B. Minor.

-33-

April 1843

17 - Called at Middlesex - back water -

did not work. Rainy. Great, long,  
dull day. Visited Mrs. Hodgman.<sup>1</sup>  
Went down to see the water --- to  
the vestry. Called on Mrs. Miles.

18 - M.E. and I went up to the vestry.  
Worked on Mariana's tunic. Mary E.  
spent the eve with us at Mrs. Ham's.  
Called on Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Win.

19 - At Mrs. Ham's. Went to the Appleton  
St. Picnic. A fire on Central St.<sup>2</sup>

-----  
1. Wife of Benjamin Hodgman. They lived  
on Lawrence Street near the Stickneys and  
the Fosses. Hodgman was a carpenter at  
the Whipple Powder Mill.

2. Mr. Burnap's church on Appleton Street  
held a picnic or vestry tea party where  
hymns were sung and refreshments were  
enjoyed. A large fire broke out in a  
building used for manufacturing carriages  
on Central Street.



-35-

April 1843

- 20 - Pleasant. Philipend, Richmond, George, Mary, Lucy and I went over to the Cemetery.<sup>1</sup> My birthday. Lewis went to Boston
- 21 - Beautiful day. Went back to Middlesex again at noon.
- 22 - Eben moved Abel Brown. Pleasant.

23 - Rainy. Went with G.H. [George Ham]  
to Mr. Burknep's P.M.

24 - Rainy. Received a letter from  
Jeffrey - paper from Barnstead.

25 - Rainy. Came out of the Mill at noon  
to wait. Had my breast pin mended.  
Called at Mrs. Richardsons.

-----  
1. The Lowell Cemetery was laid out over  
44 acres of ground on the east bank of  
the Concord River near the street where  
Susan and Lucy boarded with the Fosses  
and near the Whipple Powder Mill. The  
Cemetery, modeled after the Mount Auburn  
Street Cemetery in Cambridge,  
Massachusetts, was designed as a park  
with trees and flowering shrubs to be a  
"garden of graves." The cemetery was  
consecrated in 1841. Oliver Whipple was  
a member of the Board of Trustees, which  
maintains the cemetery today much as it was  
designed in the 1840s.

-36-

April 1843

26 - Almira and I passed the bleachery.<sup>1</sup>  
Called at Mrs. Robinsons. Went up  
to the Pawtucket Falls<sup>2</sup> - locomotive  
house - canal bridge and everywhere  
else. Went to the anti slavery  
lecture.

27 - Rainy. Went to Methuen PM.<sup>3</sup> -Took  
tea with K. Ham.

28 - Pleasant. Mrs. Hodgman sick - (very  
warm) Staid a few hours with her  
[infant son] George. Lucy and I  
went over the farm by Nesmith - on  
to Fort Hill by the cemetery home.<sup>4</sup>  
Went to the Hutchinson concert at  
the Mechanics' Hall.

-----  
1. The Lowell Bleachery whitened the  
cotton textiles produced by the Lowell  
mills in preparation for the process of  
printing. Lowell calicos were famous in  
the nineteenth century.  
2. The Pawtucket Falls provided the over

thirty foot drop in the Merrimack River which was the source of the waterpower for the Lowell mills. The locomotive used by the Locks and Canals Company was located in its own engine house.

3. Methuen is a neighboring town, east of Lowell.

4. Their excursion circled the area of Belvidere, the eastern part of the city of Lowell.

-37-

May 1843

29 - Fine day. Mrs. Hodgman sick yet.  
George Ham, Lucy and I went to the bleachery. Elias' wife spent the day on the Boott [Mills].

30 - Rainy. Did not attend meeting Mrs. Stickney taken sick.

May 1 -  
Very rainy Sick. Did not go to the mill. I thought of going away.

2 - We went to the Middlesex in the morn did not work any. G. [George] Lucy and I went to the Irish Burying ground. G and I went to Mr. Russell's concert at Mechanic's Hall.<sup>1</sup>

3 - Went with Almira to Mr. [illegible] office. Called at Mr. E. Burknep's, Mr. Clough's and [illegible] Spent the am at Stickney's. Jenness came down.

-----  
1. The Catholic Cemetery, St. Patrick's, is located on Gorham Street. Mr. Russell was a concert singer. Mechanics' Hall, the City Hall and the Lowell Museum were the principal locations where lectures, concerts and exhibits were staged.

-38-



May 1843

4 - Went to work at 7 o'clock Jenness and Orrin left for Epsom Mr. Bowers left Mrs. Hams

5 - Pleasant. At work. Payday. Took 9'36 Clara Brown called. Eben and wife went to Acton.<sup>1</sup>

6 - Eben and wife returned with news of the rail car accident.

7 - Pleasant. Rainy. Did not attend church. Went to Mr. McCoy's Temperance lecture at St. Luke's Church.<sup>2</sup> Wells came over.

8 - Sixteen weeks today! But it will not be sixteen weeks longer here. Called at the office.<sup>3</sup> George Ham began work at Belvidere.

9 - Called at Mrs. Hodgman's found her better. Mrs. Stickney very sick. Morrison called at Mr. Foss.

-----  
1. A town south of Lowell, near Concord.  
2. The Second Episcopal Church on Merrimack Street.  
3. On May 8 the post office was opened for the first time until 8:30 PM each night except Sunday "to better accomodate the citizens," according to the Lowell Courier.

-39-

May 1843

10 - Pleasant.

11 - In the mill as usual. Wish I was at Epsom or [illegible] or Pembroke.<sup>1</sup>

12 - Lucy left the mill watched with Mrs. Whipple.<sup>2</sup>

- 13 - Mr. Jenness called on his return from Boston. Wrote a few lines home by him. Lucy called at Middlesex. Received my ring. Eben started for Hopkinton [New Hampshire].
- 14 - Went to Mr. Porter's. C. Baptist AM  
Mr. Edson's St. Ann's Church PM<sup>3</sup>  
Lucy to Mr. Ballard's AM Mr. Hose PM<sup>4</sup>  
Very hot day. Lucy went to a funeral. Called at Abel Brown's.

- 
1. New Hampshire towns well known to Susan.
2. Mrs. Whipple, the wife of Oliver Whipple, had a fatal illness and died in August.
3. Lemuel Porter, Worthen Street Baptist Church and Theodore Edson, First Episcopal Church on Merrimack Street.
4. Joseph Ballard, First Baptist Church on Church Street and Schuyler Hoes, Methodist Episcopal Church, Hurd Street.

-40-

May 1843

- 15 - Very hot day. Lucy went to Mr. Whipple's. Played chequers with Lewis at eve. Eben returned from Hopkinton.
- 16 - Very warm. Orrin returned [from Epsom] Mrs. Ham papered and painted. I called at the paper store for her. Harriet had her party. George went to the Mesmerism lecture by Mr. Cobb.<sup>1</sup>
- 17 - Warm. Called at the Stage office George called for me, found no basket. Mrs. Morrison and Miss Jones called and went over to Mr. Whipple's.
- 18 - Warm. George went to the stage office for me. Gave me my ring. Brought my ring home.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Foss spent the day on the Boott [Mill].
-

1. Mr. Cobb of Boston spoke at City Hall on the science of "Living Magnetism" I explaining "the philosophy of seeing in the magnetic state without the eyes, and hearing silent thoughts."
2. The ring was apparently sent to her from Epsom by her family.

-41-

May 1843

- 20 - Still immured within the massy brick walls of a hateful factory. A. Brown brought me a few lines from Uncle. They were indeed a luxury.
- 21 - Mary E [Stickney] Ellen Grummett & I went over to the Cemetery and called at Mr. Whipples. Wrote home. Went to the temperance lecturer from Lynn. Lucy and Wells called on us.
- 22 - Sick - did not work. Mrs. Hodgman and I called at Mrs. Osgoods. [illegible] chosed my bonnet of Mrs. Darrah, Central Street.<sup>1</sup>
- 23 - Pleasant. In the mill as usual.
- 24 -
- 25 - Called at Mrs. Whitney's Hurd St. Eben's and Whit's wives called at the mill.<sup>2</sup>
- 26 - Pleasant. Lewis removed from Mrs. Ham's Bowers came and took his things also.

- 
1. A milliner at 12 Central Street.
  2. For friends of a mill operative to call for her at the counting house of her employer was not unknown, but not encouraged by the mill management.

-42-

May 1843

27 - Rainy.

28 - Did not attend church. G W, Mary  
Foss and I went over to the cemetery

29 - Mary E and I went to Stage Office.

30 - Received the basket from home.

31 - Came out at 3 o'clock. Went to  
Whipple's. Lucy left there. M. Foss  
and I went to [illegible]

June 1 - Took breakfast at Mrs.  
[illegible] on Hurd St. Spent the  
night at my own boarding house among  
entire strangers.<sup>1</sup> Called up to  
Eben's. Lucy gone to Whipples.

2 - A letter from E.S. and Jeffrey.  
Lucy called at the mill. L Harriman  
and I spent the eve at Mrs. Hams.

3 - Spent the night at Mr. Foss' with  
Lucy. Rainy.

-----  
1. Mrs. Whitney's which was probably a  
Middlesex boarding house.

**REGULATIONS**  
FOR THE  
**BOARDING HOUSES**  
OF THE  
**MIDDLESEX COMPANY.**

---

THE tenants of the Boarding Houses are not to board, or permit any part of their houses to be occupied by any person except those in the employ of the Company.

They will be considered answerable for any improper conduct in their houses, and are not to permit their boarders to have company at unseasonable hours.

The doors must be closed at ten o'clock in the evening, and no one admitted after that time without some reasonable excuse.

The keepers of the Boarding Houses must give an account of the number, names, and employment of their boarders, when required; and report the names of such as are guilty of any improper conduct, or are not in the regular habit of attending public worship.

The buildings and yards about them must be kept clean and in good order, and if they are injured otherwise than from ordinary use, all necessary repairs will be made, and charged to the occupant.

It is indispensable that all persons in the employ of the Middlesex Company should be vaccinated who have not been, as also the families with whom they board; which will be done at the expense of the Company.

**SAMUEL LAWRENCE, Agent.**

JOEL TAYLOR, PRINTER, Daily Courier Office.

Regulations, Middlesex Company  
Boarding Houses, 1846  
(Lowell Historical Society)

June 1843

4 - Wrote home by Lucy AM Went to Mr.  
Thayer's Church, Central St. PM.<sup>1</sup>  
Returned to my boarding place at  
night.

5 - Rainy. Lucy called at the mill. I  
went on the street with her and  
staid at Mr. Foss'.

6 - Rainy. Lucy started for home.

7 - Called at Mrs. Pollard's and had my  
dress fitted. purchased my gaiters  
at Wrights on Mer St.<sup>2</sup>

8 - Rainy. Called at Stone's and got  
some gin.<sup>3</sup>

-----  
1. Thomas B. Thayer, Universalist Church.

2. A.C. Wright, 59 Merrimack Street.

3. Susan's attendance at temperance  
lectures suggests that her purchase of  
gin at George U. Stone's store, West  
India Goods and Medicines in Central  
Village, was an errand run for a family  
friend. On August 12 she and a friend  
would buy liquor at Stone's as medicine  
for Mrs. Whipple who died that night.  
Despite the advocacy of total abstinence  
by the Washingtonians, many New  
Englanders still believed in the  
medicinal and revivifying power of  
spirits. George U. Stone was later  
listed in the 1845 Lowell City Directory  
as a physician.

-45-

June 1843

9 - Rainy - Payday - receive 15.79 cts.  
called at Mr. Hams & Foss'

10 - Rainy PM at my boarding place.

11 - Rainy S Hemingway sick. Went with  
Perdis to Mr. Burknaps, took tea at

- Mrs. Hams. Called on Orrin, sick at Mrs. Stickneys & returned to Hurd St.
- 12 - Called at Mrs. Pollards & took my dress. George Ham called
- 13 - Harriet W & I went a shopping. Sarah Bray came here [Mrs. Whitney's] to board.
- 14 - Morton Hemenway called.
- 15 - Mr. Mack & sister arrived. G.H. called. R. Haven called - called at Mr. Watson's, saw Mrs. Dowley.
- 16 - Worked till 7.<sup>1</sup> Went up to Mrs. Hams and spent the day. Rainy. Staid at Ebens.
- 
1. Working hours during the summer months with maximum daylight began as early at 5 AM.

-46-

June 1843

- 17 - Called at Hurd St. Took 7 o'clock cars for Boston. Landed at no. 4 G Court St Went to B Hill through the market and the [illegible] ship. [Susan Brown noted later in ink:] Attended the exercises at Bunker Hill - at finishing of monument - address by Daniel Webster - grand indeed, arr. Boston wit Geo Ham.<sup>1</sup>
- 18 - Went to the Tabernacle Howard St. to church, Green Park. Walked around the common with Mr. N's wife. I then went to Park St. church.
- 19 - Went all over Boston. Took Charlestown Branch cars to M - Fresh pond & [illegible] square the city. Took L (Lowell) cars again couch to [illegible], took tea, returned

to Hurd St. tried change.

20 - Went to work after breakfast. S.  
Bray and I called on the Lawrence 29  
& 18 Suffolk.<sup>2</sup>

-----  
1. Daniel Webster's oration at the  
dedication of the Bunker Hill monument  
was expected to attract thousands of New  
Englanders.

2. The two young women were calling on  
friends at other corporation boarding  
houses.

-47-

June 1843

21 - came out sick at 7 wrote home by  
Mrs L George called.

22 - very hot, Did not go in.

23 - Went to work at 7 o'clock

24 - G. Ham called M E Stickney left

25 - Went to Mr. Burknaps Morn. Mr.  
Ballard's heard his [illegible] PM  
Called at Stickney's Saw Mr.  
Jenness.

26 - Called at Mr. Hams & Stickneys Row  
boat arrived from Charlestown.<sup>1</sup>

27 - Evening. Called at Mrs. Hams  
Betsey and I were out sick.

-----  
1. To celebrate the Bunker Hill  
dedication at Charlestown, a ten man crew  
rowed a 36 foot barge, the Bunker Hill,  
up the Middlesex Canal from Medford to  
Lowell, passing through many sets of  
locks and towns on the way. They  
anchored the barge near the hotel, the  
American House, where they celebrated  
some more.

-48-



June 1843

28 - James Poor called at the mill evening. He called with Mr. [illegible] We went to see the boat and took ice cream at French.<sup>1</sup>

29 - Harriet W. sick - called Dr. Graves [on Hurd Street] in the night. I went up with him. Called at French's with S. Bray.

30 -

July 1 - Jonas Sanders came down [from Epsom] called at Mrs. Hams.

2 - Did not attend church. Spent the afternoon on Lawrence St. Wrote home by Orrin. Conflagration at Fall River.<sup>2</sup>

3 - Sick Did not work. Orrin went home. I bought my shawl paid 5.00 A letter from L. [illegible] & Aunt Catherine for Lucy.

-----  
1. Amos French, Confectioner, 21 Central Street. In late June, French's was advertising strawberries and cream in season.

2. Two hundred and fifty buildings burned at Fall River on a windy June 2 in a raging fire which killed four people.

-49-

July 1843

4 - Holiday. Spent the day at Mrs. Hams Old Mrs. Foss very sick. ; Gave N Johnson her letter. Went to Museum to see Kip Darling perform.<sup>1</sup>

5 - Rainy went to work at 7 Called at

Fosses & Hams

- 6 - In the mill as usual
- 7 - Received 15'10 Paid 4.64 [in board]  
but Mr. Stickney 2'1. bought braid  
chain 2'5. Letter from Lucy.
- 8 - In the mill as usual
- 9 - Morn Sarah, Persis & I went over to  
the new burying ground. Persis and  
I went to Mr. Miles church. Susan  
and I to Mr. Hanks PM<sup>2</sup> Went to Mrs.  
Hams & cemetery at eve.
- 
1. There was no advertisement in the  
Lowell Courier for this performance.  
2. Stedman Hanks, John Street  
Congregational Church.
- 50-
- July 1843
- 10 - Persis and I went a shopping –  
bought mits & calico dress. Misses  
Lums came here to board. Mrs.  
Stickney sick.
- 11 - Called at Mr Foss's & Hams. Watched  
with the Vance family.
- 12 - At home
- 13 - Attended Adams school<sup>1</sup>
- 14 -
- 15 - Persis W went to Mrs. Wentworthy to  
board.<sup>2</sup>
- 16 - Six months since I left home Went  
the Burknap PM Heard Mr. Alder of  
Andover at the vestry Eve took tea  
at Mrs. Hams
- 17 -
- 18 -

- 
1. The "Adams School" may have been the #15 primary school kept by Miss Louisa Adams who might have been an acquaintance of Susan's. She paid another visit on July 31.
  2. A Middlesex boarding house on Warren Street.



View of Merrimac Street, 1856  
(Lowell Historical Society)

July 1843

- 20 - Mother arrived in Lowell. I took tea at Mrs Hams & staid over night.
- 21 - Came out before 7. Took tea at Ebens.
- 22 - Did not work. Took tea at Mr. Stickneys.
- 23 - We went to Miles AM Mother to Burnaps PM I staid at Mrs. Hams - Mother came home with me at night. Went to cemetery.
- 24 - Mother went to Boston I returned to Hurd St. GH called is polited as home [?] I returned to Whitney's.
- 25 - Called at Mrs. Hams and Mrs Foss'
- 26 - Mother called I at Whipples. we watched there.<sup>1</sup>
- 27 - Mother washed for me at Stickneys called here at eve.

-----  
1. It was customary in New England towns for neighbors and friends to relieve families by sitting at the bedside of the sick and the dying, comforting them as much as possible.

July 1843

- 28 - Mother spent the day at Mrs. Whipple's night at Hams I called there at eve.
- 29 - Mother left Mrs. Hams & spent the

day with Mrs. W GH called, we  
called there and Mother staid all night.

30 - Rainy. Spent day at Hams Called at  
39 Lawrence.

31 - Rainy. Mother went home. Went to  
work at 8 Called at Adams School.  
Bought my trunk of McLanathan.<sup>1</sup>

August 1 -

2 - Eve. Took a letter by mistake.  
Paid 30 cts for "Humphrey Clock."

3 - Eve purchased by album 100 at Powers  
and Bagley<sup>2</sup> Mercy started for  
Manechester<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. S. McLanathan, 47 Merrimack Street,  
Trunk manufacturer.
  2. Later Susan crossed out the first item  
in this entry. She apparently returned  
the first album she purchased and bought  
a more expensive one the next day.
  3. Manchester, New Hampshire was another  
textile manufacturing center about thirty  
miles north of Lowell.

-54-

August 1843

4 - Eve. Purchased by Album with S Bray  
at Powers - 112 ½ Received 14'82  
Paid 5'54.

5 - Called at Powers

6 - AM at home PM went with Bray to  
Burnaps, & to hear Johnson at City  
Hall.

7 - Pamela Kent and I went out. Bought  
Highland Shawl 197.<sup>1</sup> [illegible]  
Moulton left.

8 - Rainy. E. Jones left. Sent paper  
to Boston and home. Harriett and I

went a shopping. Letter from Lucy.

9 - Betsey and R Libby came here to board. GWH called Rainy.

10 - BW called at the door. Rainy.

11 - John Steel & Brasure called to see me. Pamela Kent & I went a shopping Sent a box home. Rainy.  
Mercy returned from Manchester.

-----  
1. In August, Ward & Thompson's on the corner of Merrimack and John Streets were advertising; "Shawls! Shawls! Cashmere, Silk, Edinboro, Brocha, Mouslin de Laine. Highland Plaids."

-55-

August 1843

12 - Cloudy. M E & Almira [Stickney] called at the Mill Martha and I went to Stone's for liquor. Mrs. Whipple died tonight. S. Bray and I called at Powers & Bs.

13 - Pleasant - called at Stickneys and Hamms & dined at Ebens. Went to St. Pauls church.<sup>1</sup> heard Mr [illegible] Went with Bray and M. Syne to City Hall. Johnson, Clark & Brewster spoke called on May Gowell.

14 - Mrs. Whipple was buried. M Gowell & S Holmes called at the mill.

15 - called at Ebens & Isaacs. Mr [illegible] went to Concord to work.

16 - Seven months today since I left the north road! How swift the wheels of time roll on. S. Tebbetts called at Mrs. Hams a moment.

17 - Bought needles & linen of Lord for wrists 8 cts

18 - Seven months since I first entered

the Middlesex Since I saw home!  
Alone & among strangers! Oh, when  
shall I return?

---

1. First Methodist Church, Hurd Street,  
Schuyler Hoes, Pastor

-56-



Power Loom, One Girl Attends Four,  
ca. 1840  
(Lowell Museum)



August 1843

- 19 - S. Bray went to Manchester. Jane Shute came here to board. Called at office with Mercy.
- 20 - Rainy wrote to mother. Went with M Lund to Mr Hanks church PM Commenced reading Humphrey's clock.
- 21 - Rainy M Lund left us for her sisters Mercy sick. We had a fire in the mill.<sup>1</sup>
- 22 -
- 23 - Called at Mrs. Hams & spent the eve with Mr Wood & Almira Stickney.
- 24 - I came out at nine, went in to the Hamilton with Betsey waited till two for a beam.<sup>2</sup>
- 26 - Mary Gowell called to see Snow. Went on to the street with Harriett & Martha

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1. No fire at the Middlesex was reported in the Lowell Courier.
2. A beam wound with warp threads fits into the back of the loom and without it, no weaving can be done. See illustration, page 57.

August 1843

- 27 - Very warm. G Ham left me a note for Lucy by Mrs Teel. Went to Mr Ballard's M. called on M Gowell went over to Dracut to hear a Portuguese preach at evening.
- 28 - Weston left us on a visit.

29 - Went out to Smith's with B. Libby.

30 - Took a new Spare hand.<sup>1</sup> Came out at 6 to wait for a beam. A letter from Lucy Susan & Persis called to see us. Betsey Libby started [at the Middlesex]

31 - Went out on the street. Went to work at 10 o'clock wrote to GWH.

September 1 -

Morgan Holt came to board here. Sarah Bray returned. We called on Mrs. Cox. Bought elastic wits 42 cts. Called at Mrs. Hams. [illegible] down.

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1. Susan had herself started out as a sparehand weaver, and now she was teaching another newcomer how to operate the loom and fix broken threads.

-59-

September 1843

2 - Lewis called at the mill. I called at Mrs. Hams. M Heminway left the mill.

3 - Went with S Bray & M Lund to Blanchards.<sup>1</sup> AM with L. Shutt to Wesley Chapel PM. <sup>2</sup> City Hall to hear Johnson of Boston & to the Hamilton Hall to hear a Jew.

4 - The runner brought me a letter from G. Called at Mrs. Hams. G came down with me. Mr. Stickney & Wife started for [illegible]

5 - Called in the Boott. M Gowall had removed. Called & left the Rose of Sharon at Mrs. Hams. G came down with me.

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1. Dressmaker, Harriet M. Blanchard's on Merrimack Street.

2. There were two Wesleyan Methodist

Churches, one on Bartlett Street and the other on Lowell Street which had been organized in 1843 and might have been the chapel.

3. Possibly a needlework or quilt pattern.

-60-

September 1843

6 - came out sick before seven. Wrote home. Went with B Whitney to see the tables at the City Hall picnic.<sup>1</sup> Harriet W. taken sick.

7 - left my letter at the office. at home all day.

8 - At home. H Whitney sick.

9 - Lucy's birthday. 22 today! Called at M Gowell's in Belvidere Left dress at Pollards.

10 - At home AM Went with J. Shute to St. Ann's PM with Shute, Bray & Libby to the cemetery. Harriet sick.

11 - S. Bray & I left our Gaiters at Simons to be made. Saw C. Bickford & C Sanborn & M Gowell. Went into the mill again at 5.

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1. The Martha Washingtons, the ladies' auxiliary of the Washingtonian temperance society, were holding a picnic at City Hall to raise funds for the cause. A brass band was promised.

-61-

September 1843

12 - Called at Miss Rollout & Mores Saw

Frances Magoon.

- 13 - Pleasant. Took my dress from Miss Pollards. paid 30 cts for cutting.
- 14 - Went with M. Lund to Simons & Swans.<sup>1</sup>  
Bought linen insertions for wrists  
28 cents.
- 15 - Called at Simons. Janet Shute taken sick. Called at Dr. Butterfields at Ayers.
- 16 - 8 months today. Called at office.  
Letter from Lucy.
- 17 - Went with M Whitney to Mr. Ballards' with S. Bray to Mr. Burnaps, a funeral. With Lund to Stickneys & Hams to hear the Jewess.
- 18 - Left the mill. Went to Sunderland's lecture on Magnetism.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Daniel Swan, Boots and Shoes, located on Merrimack Street formed a partnership in 1843 with Simons.

2. A lecture on mesmerism or hypnotism at Mechanics' Hall which promised trances and somnambolic or sleepwalking phenomena.

-62-

September 1843

- 19 - Jane Shute went to work again. Took 9'73 cts of Anderson Paid Mrs [Whitney] 345 cts Bought Chuson for dresses paid 816.<sup>1</sup> Lining 18 Cutting 85 cts. Called at Foss' Nancy staid at Stickneys.
- 20 - Bickford called at Stickneys. I called on all the friends. Staid at Mrs. Foss.
- 21 - Started for home with Bickford. brought me from Aunt [Catherine?] staid all night. Found Uncle Berry

& Theodore here.

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1. Watson & Company was advertising cashmere and "Chusan" prints at  $12 \frac{1}{2}$  cents a yard. Could she have bought 68 yards?